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ABSTRACT

In early 1985, one of the new television channels resulting from the expansion of the Fort Smith TV Cable Company was allocated to Westark Community College (WCC). In July, a task force was appointed to develop recommendations regarding programming, policies, staffing, equipment, physical location, and organizational location. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the task force. After chapter 1 describes the acquisition of the channel by WCC, chapter 2 reviews college and task force activities to date. Chapter 3 looks at options for the use of the channel, including professionally produced telecourses, the establishment of an on-campus studio, local production by contract, and production with portable equipment, message board, and satellite programming. Chapter 4 presents the task force recommendations, related to: (1) major reliance on telecourses; (2) local production in television station studios; (3) production with portable equipment; (4) 24-hour use of a message board; (5) satellite programming; (6) delay of channel sharing; (7) limited public access; and (8) professionally produced features. After chapter 5 considers promotion and marketing issues, chapter 6 reports on equipment on hand, equipment installation, and additional needs; and chapter 7 addresses staffing needs for a television coordinator, technical assistant, and maintenance technician. Finally, chapter 8 reviews State Board of Higher Education policy and chapter 9 looks at the possibility of expansion to other cable systems, A resource list that includes producers/distributors and professional organizations is appended. (RO)

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Report of the

TELEVISION TASK FORCE

Submitted To:

Joel R. Stubblefield

By:

Fran Bedell
Meta Potts
Richard Hudson,
Chairman

October 10, 1985

Westark Community College

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ACQUISITION OF THE CHANNEL

Chapter 1

Initial Request

When the Fort Smith TV Cable Company announced plans to expand from 11 to 30+ channels in 1983, a letter was submitted to the cable company manager, Mr. Ed Davidson, requesting that one of the new channels be allocated to Westark Community College. On July 19, 1983, Mr. Davidson was visited by Richard Hudson who reiterated the college's interest in the use of a channel. When no commitment was received from the cable company (which had by then become known as Rogers Cablesystems of Fort Smith, Inc.), another letter was mailed in April 1984 at the height of a local controversy regarding levels of service and the size of the fee increase sought to fund the cable system expansion. Copies of that letter were mailed to the seven members of the Fort Smith Board of Directors and the Mayor requesting such a channel.

City Franchise

As a result of that activity, City Ordinance No. 65-84 of 1984 amended Ordinance No. 3169, as amended, to provide for increased TV cable rates, minimum levels of service, and other matters. That ordinance amended Section I, Subsection (3) of Section 4 (a) of Ordinance No. 3169 to read as follows:

(3) Provide access to at least one (1) channel, without charge, for the use of the City and provide access to at least one (1) channel, without charge, for the use of Westark Community College;

The expansion of the cable system was completed in early 1985 and Channel 17 was allocated to Westark. For the past ten months that channel has carried the single message, "Educational Access Channel."

Cable Subscribers

Rogers Cablesystems serves 30,000 subscribers in Fort Smith and Greenwood in Arkansas and Roland and Muldrow in Oklahoma. It is estimated that 50,000 adults are potential viewers of Channel 17. Within the Fort Smith metropolitan area, there are 20,900 adults over the age of 24 who have completed high school but have not attended college. In addition, there are some 10,000 who have some college experience but have not completed college. There are over 6,000 mothers who are not working. These adults constitute a major audience for educational programming.

Status of Cable System Readiness

Residents of Fort Smith are well aware that Rogers Cablesystems expanded its services in 1983-84 by greatly increasing the number of channels available to subscribers. Most are unaware that the rewiring of the city brought additional features. One, which is a key to the manner in which Westark will be accessing the cable system, is the two-way capability of the cable. Not only can the cable company

transmit a signal to all subscribers, but from every subscriber location a signal can concurrently be transmitted back to the cable system. This makes possible several eventual innovations, including subscriber responses to polls. More important to Westark is the fact that this feature makes it possible for a signal to be transmitted from the campus, via cable, to the cable company control facilities, and from there to subscribers.

An even lesser known innovation is the multiple frequency feature which allows several signals to be transmitted concurrently on the cable and selectively received. Using this feature, it is possible, with the appropriate reception equipment, for Westark to transmit programming over the cable which would not be received by general subscribers, but could be received at selected locations, such as public schools, financial institutions, medical centers, industries, etc.. It is even possible for this targeted type of programming to be transmitted over the cable to selected locations at the same time regular programming is going out over the cable to general subscribers.

ACTIVITIES TO DATE

Chapter 2

Initial Study

In the spring of 1985, at the request of Westark President Joel R. Stubblefield, Sandi Sanders and Dan Page, with the assistance of John Samuels and several members of the staff of Rogers Cablesystems, did considerable research which resulted in a very helpful report and the acquisition of a considerable amount of basic equipment essential to Westark's use of Channel 17.

Appointment of Task Force

As the college staff began to explore various options regarding programming, physical location of equipment, organizational assignment of programming responsibilities, etc., it became obvious that an intensive research effort would be required to generate the kind of information necessary to make those decisions. On July 16, 1985, President Stubblefield appointed a small Task Force consisting of Richard Hudson (chairman), Frances Bedell, and Meta Potts. Their assignment was a wide-ranging, but can be summarized as calling for recommendations regarding programming, policies, staffing, equipment, physical location, and organizational location.

Task Force Activities

Because none of the members of the Task Force had experience directly related to the assignment, and because a number of institutions have utilized cable channels for several years, the Task Force members determined that the major thrust of their activities should be to visit existing college cable channel installations and to interview personnel with experience in such operations.

After learning that Oklahoma is one of the leading states in the utilization of cable channels by educational institutions, the Task Force traveled to Oklahoma City on July 25 and 26, 1985, and visited Oklahoma City Community College and Rose State College. On August 26 and 27, 1985, the Task Force visited Tulsa Junior College in Oklahoma and Eastfield College and the Telecommunications Center of the Dallas County Community College District in Texas. On September 16, two members of the Task Force visited the cable channel installation at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Between visits to these various sites, a large volume of printed materials was obtained from professional organizations, other institutions, and the nation's major producers and distributors of educational television programming. Numerous phone conversations and interviews were conducted with experienced telecommunications personnel in a number of states. These visits and contacts proved extremely helpful. The Task Force members were very much impressed with the caliber of people involved in telecommunications and with their willingness to share their experience and expertise. A computer data

search by the University of Arkansas Library resulted in the accumulation of numerous articles on telecommunications. The Westark LRC obtained the articles utilizing OCLC.

OPTIONS FOR USE OF THE CHANNEL

Chapter 3

The Task Force reviewed a full range of options involving educational and general interest/entertainment programming from sources including satellite, video tape, film, local production, and message board announcements.

Professionally Produced Telecourses

The most common use of cable channels by colleges was determined to be the programming of professionally produced video taped courses offered for college credit. Not only do many community colleges across the country offer such programs, but several of the large community colleges are among the nation's major producers of telecourses. These include the Dallas County Community College District, Miami-Dade Community College, and Coast Community College in California. Other major sources of such programs are the Southern California Consortium, the Maryland Educational Television, the Annenberg/CPB Project, and the Public Broadcasting System. Over the years the production of such programming has moved far beyond the close-up shot of the professor lecturing the audience (known in the trade as the "talking head") to programs that are filmed on a variety of locations with a minimum of production done in a classroom. These courses are produced in a series format tailored to a college semester and are accompanied by very

professionally done study guides intended for use by the student viewers.

On-Campus Studio

Another option reviewed by the Task Force was for Westark to construct television studios, acquire the appropriate equipment, and generate its own programming.

Television studios have large square footage and ceiling height requirements, and to equip even a small studio and control room with nothing more than the basic equipment has an initial cost of approximately $300,000. Such a facility and equipment would, of course, be useless without trained personnel, including camera operators, control room personnel, and an engineer. In addition to high personnel and utility costs for such an operation, there would be the continuing expense of equipment maintenance and replacement. The only justification for such a facility would be the initiation of a training program for radio and television personnel. Radio-TV departments already exist at two universities in Arkansas, and such a program has never been suggested as a priority for Westark.

Local Production by Contract

A lack of campus production studios would not not exclude the college from production. Fort Smith has three television stations with fully equipped studios and trained personnel. Two of the three stations have expressed a willingness to sell their services to the college on an ad hoc basis.

While it is unlikely that the college will see fit to develop telecourses (given the experience and resources of the existing major producers), there may well be a need for the taping of interviews with campus guests, promos about upcoming events, athletic events, and promotional features related to registration, etc.

Production with Portable Equipment

Even if the local TV stations did not exist and the college lacked a television studio, there remains the possibility of some local production utilizing portable equipment. During its visit to Eastfield College in Mesquite, Texas, an institution with a reasonably well-equipped television studio, the Task Force determined that the Eastfield staff is doing more on-site production utilizing portable equipment than studio production. For an expenditure of $50,000 to $70,000 Westark could do reasonably high-quality production anywhere on the campus or in the community. This could include sporting events, concerts, lab demonstrations, and a whole variety of other possibilities.

Another option is to have this kind of capability without the heavy investment in equipment and the requirement of a trained staff. The local television stations, as well as free-lance producers, will make available to the college, at rates starting at $75 per hour, cameras, camera crews, and editing equipment.

Message Board

Westark has already acquired the equipment that is needed for one type of programming that can be used up to twenty-four hours a day. A very important type of communication, which was utilized extensively by every institution visited, is the message board. Using its high-quality character generator device, the college can put typed messages on the screen in a variety of colors and fonts. The character generator Westark has acquired has an unusually large capability that will allow as many as 150 screens, or pages, to be prepared in advance and televised in selected order. There is also a feature which allows a "crawling" or traveling messages across one portion of the screen while stationary text is displayed on another. Experienced users of these devices encourage the use of a variety of colors and the use of a limited amount of text on screen at any one time. Contrary to suggestions that this device could be used for displaying the college's course schedule on screen, experienced users caution that the screen should be thought of much as a billboard. That is, messages should be brief and to the point so that large fonts can be used and the screen can be read at a glance.

Among the uses of the message board are promotion of the college registration dates, advertising of campus events, listing of campus job openings, promotion of other scheduled programming, etc.

Satellite Programming

The big growth area in television programming sources involves satellites. A variety of services have been developed which offer

programming to educational institutions and/or local cable systems. Some of these are advertiser supported and some are offered on a subscription basis. The largest growth within the satellite programming field has been in continuing education for specific groups, such as bankers, engineers, medical personnel, etc.

Sharing With Other Agencies

In many cities with an educational access channel, public schools, colleges, fire departments, and other agencies share the channel. Various time blocks are assigned and are the subject of frequent negotiation and occasional conflict. Such arrangements result from franchise wording.

In Fort Smith the Rogers' franchise does not provide for an "educational access channel," but for "...one channel...without charge, for the use of Westark Community College."

Westark is certainly not legally obligated to share the channel and, indeed, an argument could be made that since the channel is "for use by Westark," consent of the city and the cable company should be sought if channel use were contemplated.

Public Access

In some communities, including Little Rock and Fayetteville in Arkansas, cable companies have either voluntarily or as a requirement of their franchise agreements with local governments designated a channel through which any local citizen or group can generate programming.

Because such a channel is not available in Fort Smith, one option is to allow some degree of public access to the Westark channel with careful college control. Another option would be for the City of Fort Smith to provide public access through its channel.

Professionally Produced Features

Aside from that programming designed as college credit courses, there is a large volume of programming available from a multitude of sources throughout the country. Some programming, such as films and tapes produced by various trade organizations, labor unions, businesses, the United States Government, etc., is available at no cost. Another no-cost source is the Arkansas Educational Television Network's library of public domain programming. Mr. Raymond Ho, AETN Director, has offered the college the opportunity to dub (record) anything in this library. There are numerous other sources which make such programming available at fees ranging from modest to prohibitive.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4

RECOMMENDATION: MAJOR RELIANCE ON TELECOURSES

Telecourses in Spring 1986

This committee recommends that Westark rely heavily upon professionally produced telecourses, which are developed according to recognized principles of instructional design and which present a body of knowledge through use of sight, sound, color, movement, and print. This type of programming is unquestionably appropriate on a college channel. It will provide a new service to the community, and it is potentially self-supporting.

It is recommended that in the spring of 1986 Westark begin cablecasting five courses. Those recommended were chosen by the Task Force in the interest of time and they were selected from the lists of recommendations made by the coordinators in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Dallas. It is the recommendation of the Task Force that these courses begin simultaneously with the second semester on-campus courses, i.e., January 13, 1986. Below is a list of the suggested telecourses, their producers, and the Westark courses for which they could be used:

Modified; see attached memo.

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (Dallas County Community College District)
American National Government, 2753

BUSINESS FILE (Dallas County Community College District)
Introduction to Business, 1303

THE WRITE COURSE (Dallas County Community College District)
Freshman English I, 1203

NEW LITERACY (Southern California Consortium)
Survey of Data Processing, 1203

THE MONEY PUZZLE (Miami-Dade ommunity College)
Principles of Economics, 2803

Each course should be repeated a minimum of four times each week and be broadcast at varying times that will mesh with a variety of student schedules.

Video tapes of these telecourses can be placed in the LRC so that students not on the cable can come onto campus for viewing and cable viewers can use them for review. Although it does not appear to be prevalent on most college campuses, Rose State College in Oklahoma City reported a substantial number of noncable viewers taking telecourses. These people from the community came to the college to view the telecourse as a self-paced course in the library. With the increasing popularity of VCR's in homes, checking out copies of tapes is another option.

Licensing Fees

Leasing arrangements from these producers will include a per semester basic lease fee plus a student enrollment fee. Costs will vary, ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending upon tape stock used, tape format, distribution, duration, and use. Costs will be reduced considerably if Westark becomes a member of a consortium. Possible consortia open to Westark access include: Central Education Network; Southern Educational Communications Association; Higher Education Telecommunications Association, HETA; and The Instructional Telecommunications Consortium.

WCC has now affiliates with HETA.

Projected Enrollments

It is expected that the enrollments in the telecourses will come from the general public and will consist largely of non-traditional learners. Most telecourse students have been out of school several years; most of them work.

The Oklahoma and Texas colleges visited by the Task Force reported 7 to 10 percent of their total FTE enrollment to be in telecourses. All the colleges had several years of on-the-air programming and a relatively complete programming schedule. Using this as a guideline, Westark could anticipate, once it begins offering 10 to 12 telecourses a semester, an enrollment of approximately 300 students. However, viewership could be considered higher than enrollment in telecourses themselves.

Impact On On-Campus Courses

Extensive investigation of the impact of telecourses on enrollment in currently existing classes indicated that the telecourses were a noncompeting complement to, and not a competitor with, on-campus courses. In fact, the enrollment in telecourses appears to be a preliminary contributor to students later attending on-campus classes and can therefore be viewed as an aggressive marketing tool for the increase of on-campus enrollment. Several of the colleges reported that nontraditional students were introduced to college through telecourses.

Later, after developing an increase in self-assurance, telecourse students enroll in the regular college program. In other instances, because of conflicting work schedules and/or home schedules, nontraditional students were unable to attend regular classes and could begin their college careers at an early date at their own convenience by enrolling in telecourses. For this reason, the most successful telecourses correspond closely to those classes that are both successful and required on the parent college campus. Another benefit of telecourses is their use for off-air self-paced instruction. If Fort Chaffee is re-activated, it is possible that the college could use the tapes to offer college credit to military personnel on temporary duty assignment with flexibly scheduled, fast-paced courses.

Faculty Orientation

The faculty at Westark will need a complete orientation about the use of telecourses. The Task Force can arrange this orientation for such groups as the Instructional Council, Curriculum Committee, Administrative Council, and the general faculty. If invited to do so, members of the Task Force can attend divisional meetings to answer detailed questions.

The staff of the Telecommunications Center of the Dallas County Community College District has offered to support orientation by coming to Fort Smith or hosting instructors at the Center.

Recommended Westark Policies

After several visits to other campuses, and after researching procedures and practices at institutions that offer telecourses, the Task Force has established a recommended policy for telecourse implementation. These recommendations are consistent with national policies recommended by the major procedures.

Course Selection

Although telecourses serve the needs of a specific group, course selection should follow the same guidelines for on-campus courses. Identical academic standards of quality must apply.

Course selection should be based on student need, faculty availability, marketability, and cost. Those courses that draw the greatest numbers are those which are applicable to degrees and that have companion on-campus courses, or those which have a positive effect upon the student's career.

Courses should respond to the needs of the unserved student, hence will have components that differ from the on-campus course. These components will be explained in detail in the following section.

A committee of division chairs, the Television Coordinator (discussed in Chapter 7), and other interested persons should preview promo tapes and study guides before selecting offerings. Such a committee should select telecourses beginning with the Summer or Fall 1986 semester.

Instructor Selection

The first key to successful operation of telecourses is the instructor. Instructors must be knowledgeable and student centered. Preparation is just as important in telecourse instruction as in classroom instruction.

The instructor must be as familiar with the student study guide as with the television lessons, faculty guide, objectives, and optional assignments. The instructor also fits the course into the curriculum, adapts the course to the needs of students, and designs the examinations.

Telecourse students need extra care and concern that only a good instructor can give, and the extra touch may be the one difference between success and failure for many students.

The successful telecourse instructor will maintain contact with students in several ways: through telephone conversations, personal interviews, discussion meetings, personal letters, and newsletters.

Training for instructors is vital. They should have the opportunity to meet with other instructors and the coordinator as the needs arise.

Some colleges hire adjunct personnel to serve as telecourse instructors. However, most of the administrators the Task Force visited believe that telecourse instructors should be full-time members of the college faculty. Their schedules and class loads should be adjusted to accommodate the telecourse(s). Occasionally, an instructor may assume a telecourse as an overload, but this should not become standard practice.

Specific responsibilities of the telecourse instructor:

1. Preparing for and leading orientation sessions for students enrolled in the course.
2. Writing and distributing course information to be provided to students at orientation.
3. Writing and mailing a welcome letter to students.
4. Knowing all elements of the course; telelessons, study guide, and procedures.
5. Maintaining posted office hours, during which time students may make personal contact by phone or in person and the instructor may return students' calls.
6. Revising and modifying tests as necessary.
7. Writing periodic newsletters and distributing them to the students. This will be a shared responsibility with other instructors and the Television Coordinator.
8. Conducting review sessions.
9. Grading examinations and other assignments as appropriate; and maintaining grade records on each exam and assignment.
10. Maintaining other student records.
11. Making decisions and arrangements regarding make-up tests, withdrawals, and other problems which students may encounter. Such decisions must be in accord with college rules and policies.
12. Meeting periodically with the Coordinator and other campus instructors for the purpose of evaluating the elements of the course and recommending changes.

13. Conducting student evaluations of the course.

14. Performing other duties as assigned.

Textbooks, Study Guides, Etc.

Textbooks for each telecourse are preselected by the national faculty advisory committees which developed the courses, and are coordinated with a study guide. This guide gives the student a lesson-by-lesson guide for meeting course objectives.

Each division may choose to select a textbook other than that suggested by the producers of the telecourse. Some instructors prefer to use the same text as that which is used in on-campus courses. In that case, the instructor must develop a study guide which correlates with that text.

Faculty guides are provided by telecourse producers. These guides include information critical to the implementation of the course, special instructional strategies, and test materials.

A syllabus must be given to each student at orientation.

Suggested items include:

1. Instructor's name, office number, and office hours.
2. Office phone number and telecourse hotline number.
3. Course name and discipline number.
4. Course description
5. Telecourse textbook, study guide, and other required material.
6. List of television programs and titles.

7. Assignment topics and due dates.
8. Review dates or workshop locations and times.
9. Examination dates, testing center hours, make-up tests policies, and dates.
10. Make-up test procedure and dates.
11. Grading system
12. Testing procedure--I.D. Card + second photo I.D.--type of exams, etc.
13. Mailing grades in self-addressed stamped envelope.
14. Withdrawal policies, procedures, and deadlines.

Student Orientation

A student enrolled in correspondence, independent study or mediated courses is likely to feel some signals of distress at the beginning. To avert these fears and to provide needed information, a student orientation session with mandatory attendance is a must. A session should have the following components:

1. Introduction by the Coordinator.
2. Showing of the 10 minute tape, "I'm Learning Again."
3. Admissions and counseling representatives discuss services, provide catalogs and distribute and collect student data forms.
4. Divided sessions for each telecourse so that individual instructors can give specific information, distribute syllabi, and answer questions.

The hotline may be the most valuable communication link with telecourse students. It is advisable to have a separate telephone, staffed as many hours as feasible. The persons handling hotline calls should be trained to answer a variety of questions about current and coming telecourses and should have a pleasant telephone voice as well as helpful and considerate characteristics. Subject matter questions should be referred to campus instructors. When the phone is not staffed, it is advisable to have an answering machine for recording messages.

As in every other course, the instructor is essential to provide students with a successful learning experience. Telecourse students need even more attention than the on-campus student because they are detached from campus life and may feel isolated and even alienated. Therefore, contact with telecourse students is critical and can be maintained in several effective ways:

1. Information booklet--general guide for telecourses--gives information about television education as it applies to the institution.
2. Registration--Smooth registration is as important to telecourses as it is to other college programs. A well-informed faculty and counseling staff and well-planned procedures are essential.

Students enroll in telecourses because they offer convenience. Registration by mail or phone supports that convenience.

Most telecourse students who intend to enroll on campus will do so during the latter part of the regular registration period of the college. Selected telecourse personnel should be available during registration to advise and counsel students about taking TV courses.

Review sessions and workshops can be helpful, particularly right before examinations. It is recommended practice to bring students on campus again to maintain contact and to give them reinforcement. These sessions should be well-planned and should provide additional or reinforcing information to the students.

Newsletters are another handy way to communicate with students. They can be used to remind students of test times and dates, to inform them of the material to be covered by the test, and to give them pointers for studying. Topics for articles include study tips, interviews with faculty members, information about on-campus services and events, and previews of future telecourses. These newsletters can be compiled by the Television Coordinator from materials submitted by the instructors.

Postcards are also good reminders for the students. These can be pre-printed with test dates or with simple messages of encouragement from the instructor to the student.

Testing

Test banks or actual tests are contained in the course faculty guide. Prepared by the faculty content specialists during the development of the telecourses, the tests are suitable for use as

written. However, instructors are free to adapt the material should they feel it necessary. Most institutions select test questions directly from the faculty guide materials.

Tests can be administered in the Assessment Center by Center personnel. Complete instructions about administering the tests, collecting the tests, identifying the students entitled to take the tests, and other regulations pertinent to the tests should be provided to the Center in writing before the testing periods.

If possible, tests should be scheduled over the weekends so that students can come at times which are convenient to them. Test times, dates, and places should be publicized well in advance, and students should be informed more than once about the testing schedule and the policies concerning attendance, grades, and make-up times.

Students should be required to show two pieces of identification, one of which includes a picture, before they are allowed to take an examination.

Call-Back Sessions

Some institutions conduct "on-air" telecourse discussion meetings. Faculty members appear on the college's cable channel, introduce the day's lesson, broadcast the program, and then solicit questions from students via live telephone call-in. This may become a practical way to keep students informed about Westark telecourses, but the Task Force suggests that we postpone such sessions until a full schedule is broadcast.

Counselors

Some colleges designate a counselor to serve as the Telecourse Counselor, and that person becomes familiar with all aspects of the program. The counselor is present at orientation to assure students that, although they are not going to be on campus at regular, designated times, they have the same privileges as all students. The counselor advises students on the following:

a. Communication with the instructor, giving information about how to reach the instructor by phone with extension numbers
b. Review sessions and their value
c. Mail and phone contact
d. Need for self-discipline and pacing; availability of review tapes
e. Testing procedures and guidelines
f. Availability of counseling services
g. Learning Assistance Center
h. Library facilities

Costs

Telecourses are potentially self-supporting, and the Task Force recommends a two-year goal as the target for self-supporting status. To accomplish this, an average enrollment of 12-15 in each course and a change in state policy are needed. We believe that a well-designed promotional campaign will assure WCC of the necessary enrollment.

The following factors will affect the cost in estimating the telecourse budget:

Cost of leasing/purchasing tapes

Cost of extra set(s) of tapes

Faculty compensation

Staff time--coordinator, assistant, counselors, admissions personnel, testing center personnel, AV personnel

Marketing

Supplies for daily office work

Mail

Telephone, including Hotline

Equipment

Travel

Any consortial membership fees

Credibility

Credibility is a major factor which has initially concerned all institutions that have elected to offer telecourses. Many people question why such courses are even necessary. The Task Force has persued a body of information which indicates that the students who take telecourses are a distinct population. Most have been out of school several years, and most of them work. Sixty-five percent are age 22-49; 18 percent are 50-59. They enroll in telecourse because of the convenience, but they expect these courses to be of high quality, to be applicable to a degree, and to have a positive effect on their careers.

The academic content of telecourses endorsed by national consortia is equivalent to on-campus courses, with instructional design, standards, and objectives of high caliber. The additional expertise of the on-campus instructor who directs the learning process, conducts review sessions, and designs tests lends further credibility to the telecourse.

Research indicates that students learn as well via television as they do by any other mode, including the traditional classroom. Grade distributions, attrition rates, mastery of objectives, and achievements in subsequent courses are quite similar in on-campus and TV students.

It is true that students miss the camaraderie with fellow students, but the sense of isolation may be counterbalanced by the opportunity to achieve in a non-threatening atmosphere where backgrounds, age differences, and social conditions are irrelevant.

Of course, telecourses will never replace college classrooms and colleges teachers; indeed, that is not their purpose. But students are recruited to telecourses who otherwise would not be exposed to college course work, and 65-70 percent of TV students eventually come to campus for course work.

Most telecourses are designed for entry level credit; a few are applicable to electives; but a complete college curriculum on television is not a likely prospect. Some content areas and some learning objectives do not lend themselves to a TV format or to distance learning. Therefore, fears that TV will replace teachers seem to be unfounded, but TV does provide another way to reach people who are not reached by traditional modes.

State coordinating boards in several other states have recognized telecourse credits in their state funding policies and treat them the same as traditional on-campus courses when application and approval have met established guidelines and criteria. As discussed below in this report, the Arkansas State Board of Higher Education does not yet have such a policy and Westark, or a consortium of Arkansas colleges, may wish to seek a change that would ensure state funding of telecourse credits.

Representatives of the Instructional Telecommunications Consortium (ITC), an AACJC affiliate, have recently appealed for federal student financial aid on equal bases with on-campus courses, a factor that could increase enrollments significantly.

AETN

On September 16, 1985, representatives from Westark Community College met with representatives from UALR, UAF, UAMS, Garland County Community College, and AETN to discuss the possibility of an Arkansas telecourse consortium. Everyone in attendance indicated an interest in such a collaborative effort. Dr. Alan Hoffman, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Garland County Community College, was elected chairman of the group and will be working closely with John Cheek, AETN's Director of Educational Services.

AETN had earlier stated no plans for offering any telecourses in Spring 1986, but because of the interest generated at this meeting, Mr. Cheek committed to one course, "American Government." Furthermore, Mr. Cheek stated that AETN would pay the $400 licensing fee if four colleges

would commit to offering the course. Three of those present made that commitment, and Dr. Mike Daniels at SAU had earlier agreed to offer a course that was acceptable to the majority. Each institution will still be responsible for the student fees and promotion.

This agreement is strictly a pilot program and, at present, neither AETN nor the colleges and universities are bound to a continuing agreement.

Westark should seriously consider both AETN and OETN (the Oklahoma Educational Television Network) as alternate delivery systems for telecourses, for which the college can offer credit. This would enable students who are not on cable to use television as an instructional medium. Those students would be afforded all the rights and privileges of cable access students.

Alternate Uses

An institution is not limited in its use of telecourses. Because the lessons can be dubbed and made available in the LRC, instructors of traditional courses can use the tapes in large or small groups on a scheduled basis to replace or supplement other presentations. The videocassettes may provide optional enrichment or extra credit activity. Individual lessons (telelessons) may be used for community service projects or for programs for clubs and study groups. The flexibility of telecourses enables the college to make the most of its investment.

Urgency

A decision regarding the offering of telecourses in the Spring of 1986 must be made soon! The spring schedule is due for completion on October 15. The cooperation and consent of involved instructors and division chairs must be obtained. Decisions must be made regarding affiliation with consortia. Telecourses must be ordered and additional video tape players need to be requisitioned.

Modified; see attached memo.

RECOMMENDATION: LOCAL PRODUCTION IN TV STATION STUDIOS

The Task Force recommends that, in lieu of on-campus studio facilities, the college contract for local production.

Both Channel 5 and Channel 40 have indicated a willingness to do in-studio and on-location production for Westark on a fee basis. Both stations would be willing to lease studio time to the college on a commercial fee basis. Channel 5 quoted a base rate of $150, plus an hourly rate of $25, assuming advanced commitment has been made for the studio within the customary work day as opposed to nights or weekends. The Channel 40 production manager quoted a $100 per hour fee for studio production.

The steps involved in a TV studio production would include the following: advanced scheduling of any production which Westark might want to do within the studio; a strong outline of the topic(s) to be covered, a summary script including audio-visuals to be used; and advanced submission of any photography, graphics, or videotape work that might be used within the presentation. With proper preplanning,

according to Dennis Meeks, Channel 5 production manager, Westark could produce two thirty-minute programs for approximately $200. This would include not only the videotaping but also a video logo or the injection of electronic graphics, still photography, or videotape, and ending the program with some sort of visual graphics electronically produced by the television station. Channel 5 stated that the television station could commit one evening a week or one evening every two weeks for local production time for Westark.

RECOMMENDATION: PRODUCTION WITH PORTABLE EQUIPMENT

Use of TV Station Personnel

On location the prices are substantially higher than in-studio costs. The base price for a multicamera, on-location shoot, including a minimum of two cameras and two operators, would be $500, plus $250 per hour. This rate is calculated on the time at which the shooting starts until it ends and the camera crews leave the location site. Every portion of an hour is charged the hourly rate (there is no fractional hour charge). However, the editing time is included in this fee or, if graphics must be added or other visuals included in the editing, it comes under studio-production time of $25 per hour.

Single camera and recorder (portable unit) with one operator is $100 per hour (no fractional hours are charged). Editing would be performed after the shoot at no additional charge. Any overtime work (overtime is calculated as after 10:30 p.m. and on weekends) would be charged at an overtime rate, ranging $10 to $15 per hour for each crew member involved.

In addition, there are several independent contractors in the Fort Smith area who would be capable of producing programming on location.

Local independent professional producers are Ron Dalton, John McIntosh, John Bateman. These independents have varying degrees of ability and prices which generally range between $400 and $800 per day in shooting time, plus an additional charge for any special camera equipment or setup which might be required. One consideration in using an independent producer is on-air broadcast quality, which must be very carefully controlled.

College Owned Equipment

After the need and interest is determined, the college may wish to acquire sufficient portable equipment to do production. Because Westark already owns some equipment, the necessary additional lights, cameras, recorders, and editing equipment could be purchased for approximately $50,000.

RECOMMENDATION: 24-HOUR USE OF MESSAGE BOARD

The Task Force hopes to see the channel utilized for messages by October 15, 1985. This initial type of programming will function in a promotional and informational capacity to highlight campus events, advertise important dates, and preview telecourses. Other uses may include job bank data and PR information.

Background music can serve as an attention-getting device as well as aural atmosphere for visual presentations. Cable radio or an "easy listening" station can be used as message board background.

To ensure that Channel 17 is recognized as Westark's channel and that other potential users do not assume that it is a general access channel, it is recommended that the message board be "on air" at all times when other programmings is not being used. This will help to affirm the college's 24-hour a day claim on the channel.

RECOMMENDATION: SATELLITE PROGRAMMING

While the Task Force places strong priority on the utilization of Channel 17 for "distance learning" through the use of commercially produced telecourses, the existence of some 336 programmable half-hours per week provides the opportunity for the college to offer access for professional education as well as enrichment opportunities not currently available to special interest groups in the Fort Smith area. Such specific programming needs could be met through a judicious use of satellite programming.

It is recommended that Westark contract with one or more satellite programming services. Further investigation by the Television Coordinator will be necessary before selecting the service(s).

Available Services

There are a number of satellite facilities available which would allow the college unique access to special community interests. These include the following:

1. The Armed Forces Satellite Network is a mixture of network and independent programming for military. This specific

channel usage might become important should Fort Chaffee be re-opened on a permanent year-round basis.

2. BIZNET (American Business Network) channel is operated by the United State Chamber of Commerce and specializes in programs of interest to local businesses. BIZNET also provides video teleconferencing services.
3. A black entertainment television network offers black oriented movies and entertainment. While Fort Smith has a relatively small (less than five percent) black population, this channel might provide some special interest services.
4. Discovery Channel is being carried by the cable system at UALR, which reports that it is a very difficult company with which to deal. This channel provides family entertainment, educational programs, and special programs. The Discovery Channel is very active in trying to get its own dedicated channel in communities across the nation. The Discovery Channel is similar to the Learning Channel already being carried on the Rogers Cablesystems.
5. ESPN/Business Times
6. Financial News Network predominately sponsors financial reporting.
7. Hospital Satellite Network is a scrambled network which provides movies, entertainment, and health programming, along with specific continuing educational programming, for health care professionals through the physician level.
8. Learn/Alaska is an extensive educational programming service developed through the State of Alaska.

9. NBC News from London is a special broadcast system by NBC news that picks up directed news from London and Rome.
10. The Silent Network features programming for the deaf.
11. In Touch is an audio network over which magazines and newspapers are read for the sight impaired.
12. Spanish International Network is an advertiser supported Spanish language network.
13. The College Campus Network provides free weekly programming which can be either on campus or taped and rebroadcast on cable.
14. AMCEENTU Satellite Network is a special interest network for professional engineers that provides extensive advanced programs primarily through the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Necessary Equipment for Satellite Programming

The equipment necessary to tap satellite programming is relatively inexpensive and readily available. When several of the satellite programmers were asked what equipment would be needed, they suggested that a simple base station consisting of a large dish and a receiver and some mechanism to send the signal down the cable probably would be sufficient. An alternative to the immediate purchase of such equipment may be to have Rogers Cablesystems use their receiver dish to take off programming which would be selected by Westark for rebroadcast.

Economic Feasibility

Several of the programs on satellite are advertiser sponsored, with one ten-minute break within each hour of programming that has been purchased by commercial controlled advertisers. One example is the College Campus Network which does not accept tobacco, hard liquor, or personal hygiene product advertising. Two minutes of each ten-minute advertising period can be used by subscribers for institutional announcements or for paid local commercials. Other services, such as the Discovery Channel, are purchased on a lease agreement based on the number of cable subscribers within a territory. To broadcast the Discovery Channel on the Fort Smith cable with 30,000 viewers would cost approximately $1,200 per month. Some of the other specialized use channels, such as the engineering channel and the Hospital Satellite Network are also sold on a fee basis. It is the recommendation of this Task Force that any special interest, professional, or continuing education programs should be underwritten by the special interest groups directly benefitting from them. Specifically, the Hospital Satellite Network could be underwritten by health care professionals and the two local hospitals. The Chamber of Commerce could be asked to underwrite BIZNET; the local financial institutions, FNN; and the local engineers, the engineering network.

Westark should also solicit appropriate local sponsors for PBS Adult Learning Programs. For example: "The Constitution, That Delicate Balance" -- by the Sebastian County Bar Association; "Congress, We the People" -- by the League of Women Voters-Sebastian County Republicans; "The Earth Explored" -- by TXO; and "The Africans" -- by the NAACP,

Black churches, or the Black Moslems. The college should produce "commercials" advertising the programs and their sponsoring organizations.

Satellite underwriting could have two benefits to Westark as an institution: (1) It would release Westark of the financial burden of purchasing the specialized programs. (2) The sponsoring organization would be likely to encourage viewership and a larger audience would further promote Westark to the community. (3) The degree to which other organizations within the community supported the educational programming on the Westark channel might lead them into being more supportive of Westark generally.

RECOMMENDATION: DELAY OF CHANNEL SHARING

The Task Force is not aware of any other agencies having expressed an interest in utilizing Channel 17. Thus, there is no apparent urgency in determining policy regarding shared use. For this reason, and since the college does not yet have experience in programming, the Task Force recommends that a decision be delayed for one year. By then, Westark will be in a better position to know whether and at what hours of the day blocks of time can be sacrificed without interfering with the college's programming.

If a decision to share is made, it should be with the understanding that Westark will not incur any expenses related to use by other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: LIMITED PUBLIC ACCESS

Even though other institutions have indicated that they have experienced very limited requests for public access, Westark has already had a few such contacts and the Task Force expects others. For this reason, the Task Force recommends guidelines for use of the channel by outside groups.

Pros and Cons

There are advantages to public use, including PR--facilitating the building of partnerships between the general public, local government, educators, and the cable industry; full channel usage; and larger and varied audience appeal. However, there are also disadvantages, including the need to screen out amateurish programming, and promoters of controversial or unpopular causes may seek air time, the expense and time commitment involved, etc. Despite disclaimers, many viewers are almost certain to associate what they see on Channel 17 with Westark.

Public Access Guidelines

If public access is allowed, this Task Force recommends the development of detailed guidelines, including the following:

Every individual or organization requesting to use the Westark Channel must submit tapes or program scripts for approval by a Screening Committee. While the Committee will make programming decisions, appeals from such a committee can go, of course, to the President and Board of Trustees.

Public access is limited to non-profit organizations.

Public access is limited to the time frame from 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

No organization or individual may appear on the channel more than two times per month.

All presentations must be educational in nature and scope.

All production and promotional costs for public access will be assumed by the public organization or individual making the request for access.

Westark reserves the right to cancel access agreements if the college needs the time slot or if the conditions for public usage have been violated.

Members of the Task Force hold differing views regarding the advisability of permitting public access.

RECOMMENDATION: PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED FEATURES

While professionally produced feature programming allows for almost unlimited variety, it should be noted that little of this programming differs from what is already available to cable subscribers on the 28 basic service channels offered by Rogers Cablesystems. It does not seem economically prudent for the college to invest a significant amount of

money on programming which does not really bring any new options to the viewer. However, the college should take advantage of the AETN offer as well as other opportunities for free or inexpensive programming of a quality nature.

PROMOTION & MARKETING

Chapter 5

The 24-hour availability of an access channel provides the college the opportunity of an around-the-clock window to the community. The Westark channel could therefore become a major promotional device for the marketing of the college in general, as well as for the telecourses specifically.

Despite the fact that none of the colleges which the Task Force visited had pursued a very active promotional program, it is the belief of the Task Force that the potential for promotion is great. However, the potential for promotion of Westark over Channel 17 could be a somewhat double-edged sword. If programming promotions, "commercials," etc., are not produced in a professional manner, this channel could become an indication that Westark's academic program is as "unprofessional" as the amateurishly produced TV material.

The promotion of Westark television channel should be pursued in two stages. At the outset, an extravaganza introducing the existence of the channel to the community should take the form of an aggressive public relations campaign. Westark could plan a highly visible media event that could attract Fort Smith residents from various support and potential user groups. This should be held on the Westark campus as an open house and should attract press coverage. News releases, appearances on noon TV talk shows, and public service announcements on both television and radio should begin prior to the spring semester. The

See attached memo.

college should distribute a separate telecourse brochure, as well as include telecourses within its regular schedule. Rogers Cablesystems should be asked to include a copy of the telecourse brochure in billings. A schedule should also be placed in the monthly cable program guide. A direct mail campaign could be used, as well as inserts in local and area newspapers and in newsletters such as those distributed by the larger businesses and by the Chamber of Commerce.

Westark should produce a half-hour program showing excerpts from the courses to be offered, an introduction to Westark, and to distance learning. This promotional package could be produced locally for less than $1,000. In addition, Dallas County Community College and PBS have produced generic programs on distance learning that could also be shown on Channel 17.

A series of two- to three-minute "commercials" on the telecourses could be produced and set up on a special video display in high traffic areas such as Central Mall and industrial cafeterias. This television display should be moved around to various sites in the Fort Smith area for at least several weeks prior to the beginning of the telecourses.

There should be a substantial budget dedicated to the introduction of the channel in the Fort Smith area and some intensive preintroduction planning by the Westark public relations staff. With aggressive promotion of this channel, there is no reason why Westark could not utilize its long distance learning and long distance educational support programs as a major marketing tool for the college as a whole. This, however, cannot be achieved without an aggressive promotional program that extends from a public relations program to direct media advertising to the production of some quality "leave behind" and display pieces.

The college can also use the cable channel as a primary promotional device for the traditional on-campus programs. The college soon should produce at least one thirty-minute promotional program for Westark featuring the facilities, administration and staff, students, and programs offered. Westark should also produce a series of two-minute pieces, like long advertisements, on each of the program areas. These "commercials" could be used between each of the telecourse programs as they are placed on the air. Another half-hour program should be produced prior to the fall semester. This could be a talk show format in which representatives of each of the divisions on campus discuss their programs.

These are only several suggestions; the use of Channel 17 provides the opportunity for Westark to constantly and inexpensively place its message on the air.

EQUIPMENT

Chapter 6

Equipment On Hand

In June 1985, anticipating immediate use of the channel as a "message board," several pieces of equipment were acquired and have been delivered to the campus. The following items are on hand:

A Scientific Atlanta Model 6350 Television Modulator which actually trasmits whatever signal Westark is generating down the cable to the cable company "head end"

Two character generators (Texscan SpectraGen III's, Tabletop Model SG-3GLT and Rack Mount Model SG-3RM), one of which allows off screen updating of text and serves as a back-up unit

Two keyboards to input information to the character generators

A ten-inch color monitor so that the operator of the character generator can preview text being recorded

A stand-by power supply unit which allows Westark to continue generating a signal in the event of a power shut-off or outage at the Westark campus.

A three-quarter inch video cassette player/recorder which makes possible the use of pre-recorded materials.

A Texscan CSS-90 Serial Ad Inserter which inserts 3/4" and 1/2" video cassette spots into text or satellite programming and permits up to seven day pre-timing.

The original plan, proposed early last summer, was to proceed rapidly and to provide minimal typed messages on screen with background audio from a radio station. Accordingly, a scheme was devised which would have allowed some of the equipment listed above to be located at the Rogers Cablesystems "head end" in Arkoma and some to be located on the Westark campus so that, by use of a leased telephone line and modems, character generated messages could be revised remotely from the Westark campus.

That configuration was never installed and, with the recently added capability of two-way use of the cable, is no longer necessary. This frees, for other Westark use, two modems which also had been acquired and are not shown in the list above.

Equipment Installation

In conjunction with the two-way cable capability becoming available, Rogers Cablesystems has recently installed on the campus the needed filter, switch, and amplifier unit in the Gardner Building.

Because of the cable company's need to test the cable linkage between Westark and Rogers' "head end" and to move the character generator currently on Channel 17 to another channel, Westark began installing its television equipment on Tuesday, October 8.

It was determined that the best location for the college's new television equipment was in Room 214 of the Gardner Building. This location, near the cable end and in a quiet office space, should serve well, at least until the new library is completed.

Wayne Allen, a television engineer with the cable company, is working in the evenings on a part-time hourly basis to do the installation. Intentions are for him to continue his affiliation with Westark as an "on call" maintenance technician.

Additional Equipment Needed

Assuming acceptance of the Task Force recommendations, several additional video tape players will be needed prior to January, as well as more sophisticated programmable switching device that will automatically activate and deactivate VCR's and character generators at pre-selected times, eliminating the need for constant staffing of the operation.

The college should also proceed with the acquisition of satellite receiving equipment.

See attached memo.

Other equipment which is almost certain to be needed includes a device for showing slides and 16mm films.

STAFFING

Chapter 7

Staffing is of primary importance for the success of the proposed channel operation. In the initial stages a very small staff can handle the operation. However, as activities are expanded there may develop a need for additional staff members.

A staff of three persons is recommended with each having varying levels of involvement as the channel becomes operational.

Television Coordinator

See attached memo.

The Coordinator will be responsible for the direct supervision of programming and operations. This professional position very likely can be staffed by someone already employed by the college who assumes this responsibility as an expansion of the individual's current duties. Initially, the time this person will need to devote to the channel's operation will be significant. After the channel is in operation and procedures are in place, the time required will by cyclic. The peak will come around the beginning of each semester when telecourses are starting, orientations are being scheduled, marketing is being done, and the following semester's courses are being selected and ordered. The work load will decline during the course of the semester. In these slower periods and, to some extent, throughout the year, the Coordinator can carry out unrelated duties. Should a faculty member be selected, a teaching load

of six or nine hours would probably be manageable, although three hours might be more appropriate the first semester. For non-faculty, proportionate released time would be needed. This Coordinator need not necessarily be located where the equipment and the Technical Assistant (described below) are housed.

Because the Coordinator will be directly involved in facilitating instruction and will work across division lines, and since the recommendation is that the primary thrust be on the offering of courses which are currently handled by the various divisions (with television simply serving as an alternative delivery method), it is recommended that the position be under the direct supervision of the Vice President for Instruction. Another option would be to have the Coordinator and telecourse instructors report to the Director of the LRC or the Director of Community and Continuing Education. However, since existing full-time faculty are likely to be teaching the TV sections of their regular courses, having them report to their own division chairs seems advisable.

Modified see attached memo.

The Television Coordinator MUST be a person who is enthusiastic about the use of television as a delivery system for college curricula. The coordinator should have good communication skills, both verbal and written, be sensitive to the needs of non-traditional students and be capable of maintaining the cooperation of other faculty and staff members. This person must be well-organized and a self-starter who does not require constant supervision.

Technical Assistant

Modified; see attached memo.

A full-time Technical Assistant position is recommended. This position, with a starting salary in the range of $10,000 to $12,000 (similar to that of a Secretary II,) involves clerical duties and equipment operation. This person will need office space directly accessible to the equipment.

Maintenance Technician

A Maintenance Technician is needed from the beginning, but need not be a full-time staffer. A member of the engineering staff at Rogers Cablesystems, Mr. Wayne Allen, has agreed to provided this service, working on an hourly basis in the evenings and on weekends. Mr. Allen is a product of Westark's electronics program and has extensive experience in the type of equipment Westark will be utilizing. Mr. Allen understands the requirements of Rogers Cablesystems and has access to the cable company staff for consultations and advise on unique problems. During the installation and start up phase he may be needed up to twenty hours a week. After a short time, particularly while the equipment is new, the need will significantly diminish. However, the college may want to eventually consider hiring such a person full time and including in the individual's responsibility the maintenance of all audio-visual and electronic lab equipment.

Job Descriptions

The following describes some of the job responsibilities of the Television Channel Coordinator:

1. Responsible for twenty-four hour a day programming on the channel.

2. Administration of college/community relations as pertains to programming, including handling requests for public access, coordination of publicity and advertising with the Director of Public Information, and liaison with the cable company.

3. Preparation of a monthly telecourse newsletter.

4. Completion and submission of all required reports related to the operation of the channel.

5. Development and administration of a detailed policy regarding types of information which will be carried on the message board.

6. At such time that the college elects to locally produce its own material, the TV channel administrator will function as production coordinator.

7. Coordination with consortia and with the educational television networks in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

8. Assignment of tasks to appropriate personnel as needed to ensure smooth operation of courses, including training of that personnel.

9. Management of the various aspects of telecourse administration, including participation in the selection of instructors, orientation of instructors and students, coordination with testing center personnel, and the selection of clerical help and any needed student assistants.

10. Research and planning for new telecourses, in cooperation with division chairs.

11. Thorough familiarization with every aspect of telecourse content, operation, and administration.

12. Arrangements for preview tapes of telecourses and to cooperate with administration, division chairs, and instructors in the selection of telecourses.

13. Coordination of orientation and discussion/review sessions, and preparation of student information booklets.

14. Coordination of schedule with the regular printed schedule of on-campus courses, including providing telecourse descriptions for publication.

15. Coordination with the bookstore to ensure that textbooks and study guides are available and properly displayed.

16. Ensuring that all instructors have placed their tests in the assessment center.

17. Coordination with the Vice President for Instruction and division chairs to ensure the quality and standards of telecourse administration, to solve problems and accept suggestions, and to facilitate course evaluations.

18. Editing of monthly newsletter to telecourse sources.

19. Coordination of marketing for the telecourses, including the design, preparation, and dissemination of printed materials, postcards, flyers, newsletters; the scheduling of PSAs on radio and TV; and other marketing efforts.

The following describes some of the job responsibilities of the Technical Assistant:

1. Scheduling cable operation, including telecourses, production, and public access as approved by the Television Coordinator.

2. Maintenance of a system for student records, including class rolls, drop and retention records, and validation of such.

3. Coordination with AV staff concerning tape reproductions.

4. Operation of the character generator (message board) and other television equipment.

5. Maintenance of the Hotline for telecourse students. (A recorder for messages will allow this Hotline to be in operation 24 hours a day.)

6. Typing and distribution of monthly newsletter.

7. Other duties as assigned by the Television Coordinator.

The lists above are not complete but serve to illustrate the kinds of duties for which the Television Coordinator and Technical Assistant would be responsible.

STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

Chapter 8

Significance

While the Westark TV cable channel presents an array of opportunities for providing new services to area residents, it also has the potential for becoming a very significant item in the college's capital and operating budgets. An almost limitless amount of funding can be devoted to the channel if care is not given to establish and abide by policies regarding programming, staffing, and equipment.

As a non-profit operation, the sources of revenue for the channel operation are limited. The Task Force has recommended primary emphasis on the offering of telecourses not only because they are very compatible with the college's primary mission, but because enrollments in the telecourses will generate revenue. If that revenue is limited to the tuition paid by the telecourse students, it is estimated that it will cover no more than 20 percent of the costs involved. However, if credits produced by telecourses are recognized by the State as eligible for funding like those produced by traditional on-campus courses, the operation of the channel can potentially by self supporting.

Current Arkansas Policy

The current policy of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education does not include telecourses within the definition of "fundable credit." However, a few institutions, in the the most recent round of budget recommendation negotiations with ADHE, had some TV offerings funded on a "justification basis," or aside from and supplemental to the funding formula used by ADHE. While this process can result in similar funding recommendations, it is not a reliable method because it is subject to renegotiation every two years and to the judgement of the various personnel who come and go at ADHE.

According to Dr. Gary Chamberlin, who until recently was the director of ADHE, no significant attention has been given this issue by the ADHE staff or the members of the State Board of Higher Education. A negative decision has not really been made regarding telecourses. They do no fall under the current fundable credit definition and, when a few institutions requested funding, it was easier to handle the request on a "justification basis" than to stop, conduct a study, and develop a policy. Dr. Chamberlin indicated that there is a good chance the policy could be modified to accommodate telecourses if the staff and Board where presented with information on how other states handle the matter. He further suggested that a good approach might be to follow the lead of Oklahoma and Texas and seek a trial policy change for a fixed period of time with accountability reports due and a later decision regarding a permanent change in the formula.

Policies in Oklahoma and Texas

During the course of its study the Task Force visited two states--Oklahoma and Texas. In both, the state coordinating boards had originally viewed telecourses with some skepticism and had agreed to allow them to be funded like on-campus courses only for a fixed number of years, with strict provisions for accountability reports regarding enrollment, costs, impact on on-campus courses, faculty qualifications, etc. In both states those probationary periods have now ended, and the experience with telecourses has been so successful that they are now treated and funded just like on-campus courses.

The Task Force did not survey other states, but is prepared to do so in an effort to secure the kind of data that would result in the Arkansas State Board of Higher Education approving a policy similar to those adopted in Oklahoma and Texas.

Implications of an Arkansas Policy Change

A question has arisen regarding the implications of liberalizing the Arkansas policy toward the funding of telecourses. Will such a change result in unfettered competition among Arkansas colleges and universities? More specifically, would the major universities in the state attempt to move into the Fort Smith market with telecourses which would compete for Westark with enrollment?

First, it should be noted that other institutions do not have access to a local cable channel. If they were able to gain that access, they would have to offer freshman and sophomore level telecourses before

they would pose a threat to Westark enrollment. If they did have access, and did offer courses of that nature, there would still be the problems of higher tuition and the requirement that, (assuming the Oklahoma/Texas lead were followed) telecourse students would be required to travel to the distant campuses for orientation and testing.

If other Arkansas institutions had access to the local cable and offered upper-level courses, this could actually benefit Westark by motivating students to obtain prerequisites from Westark in order to be ready for the upper-level telecourses.

Of course, it should be remembered that TV cable is not the only access Fort Smith area residents are likely to have to telecourses. In the past, telecourses have been aired over the Arkansas Educational Television Network, and viewers have been allowed to register for credit through a number of participating colleges and universities in the state. It is anticipated that a limited number of such telecourses will be available in the future, and viewers will again have the option (unless state policy is changed) of choosing the institution through which they wish to receive credit. The Task Force anticipates that most would still choose to receive their credit through their nearest institution. The selection of telecourses available on AETN is expected to be much more limited than that available on the Westark cable channel.

If Arkansas policy is to be changed, Westark should consider taking the lead in that effort and developing proposed wording. This will allow the policy to be drafted in such a manner as to preclude undue competition. For example, a requirement that students travel to the campus for orientation and testing greatly diminishes the likelihood of local residents enrolling for telecourses through institutions located in other sections of the state.

POSSIBILITY OF EXPANSION TO OTHER CABLE SYSTEMS

Chapter 9

There are several other cable systems within the Fort Smith area that have expressed some degree of interest in the offering of telecourses on their systems. One of these systems is operated by the Van Buren Cable Company which is owned by Mr. Joe Davis of Fort Smith and has a new general manager, Mr. Don Lawson, who has just moved to this area. The Van Buren Cable System serves Van Buren and Alma and has approximately 3,500 subscribers. Van Buren Cable does not reject the concept of offering telecourses, but the owner did express concern about who would pay for the modulator required to put the tapes on the air.

Razorback Cable Company also serves the Alma area and has 600 subscribers. Mr. Preston Edwards is the station manager and is interested in the use of telecourses.

Ozark Cable Company is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Dane Jaggers and covers Lamar, Webb, Altus, and Ozark.

A major problem in extending Westark programming to any of these systems is the linkage from the Westark campus to their "head ends." There are at least three options; (1) are physically linking other systems to the Rogers Cablesystems, (2) transmitting via microwave, or (3) transporting videotapes to area systems. The first two would be very costly. The third would be a continuing logistical problem, would involve more equipment at each "head end," and would not allow for message board programming.

RESOURCE LIST

Appendix

Producers/Distributors

1. Boeing Computer Services Company
   Education & Training Division
   P.O. Box 24346
   MS 9A-90
   Seattle, Washington 98124
   (206) 575-7447
   Contact: Ruth Ann Horn

2. Dallas Center for Telecommuncations
   4343 N. Highway 67
   Mesquite, TX 75150
   (214) 324-7988
   Contact: Pam Quinn

3. Coast Telecourses
   10231 Slater Avenue
   Foundation Valley, CA 92708
   (714) 926-8861
   Contacts: Nancy Nitkin, Chip Harris

4. Miami-Dade Community College
   1101 S.W. 104th Street
   Miami, Florida 33176
   (305) 596-1333
   Contacts: Ned Glenn, Cindy Elliott

5. Southern California Consortium for Community College Television
   5400 Orange Avenue
   Cypress, CA 90630
   (714) 828-5770
   (213) 863-4848
   Contact: Sally Beatty

6. Board of Vocational/Technical and Adult Education
   4802 Sheboygan Avenue
   Madison, Wisconsin 53702
   (608) 266-2318
   Contact: Loren Brunn

7. **Films, Inc.**
   733 Greenbay Road
   Wilmette, Illinois 60091
   (800) 323-4222
   Contact: Judy Corbeille

8. **National Media Program**
   University of California
   San Diego, California
   LaJolla, California 92903
   (714) 452-3446

9. **National University Consortium**
   University of Maryland
   University College
   College Park, MD 20742
   (301) 454-6627
   Contacts: Allan F. Hershfield, Gail Skrincosky

Non-Producers/Distributors/Professional Organizations

1. Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT)
   1126 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20036
   (202) 833-4180

2. Joint Council on Educational Communications & Technology (JCET)
   1126 Sixteenth Street, NW
   Washington, D.C. 20036
   (202) 659-9740

3. National Cable Television Association (NCTA)
   918 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 800
   Washington, D.C. 20006

4. Public Service Satellite Consortium
   Suite 987, 1660 L Street, N.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20036
   (202) 331-1154

5. National University Continuing Education Association
   One Dupont Circle, Suite 360
   Washington, D.C. 20036
   (202) 659-3130

6. Project ALLTEL (Project on Assessing Long Distance Learning Via Telecommunications)
   One Dupont Circle, N.W.
   Suite 410
   Washington, D.C. 20036
   Contact: Bruce N. Chaloux

7. The Instructional Telecommunications Consortium
American Association of Community & Junior Colleges
One DuPont Circle, Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 293-7050
Contact: Dr. Jim Zigerell

8. American Association for Higher Education
Center for Learning in Telecommunications
One Dupont Circle, Suite 780
Washington, D.C. 20036
Contact: Marilyn Kressel
(Publishers of Telescan)

9. Appalechian Community Service Network
Program Operations Center
P.O. Box 22262
Lexington, Kentucky 40522
1-800-354-9083

10. BIZ NET
The American Business Network
Chamber of Commerce of the United States
1615 H. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20062
(202) 463-5808
Contact: Kathryn Michael

11. SECA, Southern Educational Communications Association
P.O. Box 5966
Columbia, SC 29250
(803) 799-5517
Contact: Bob Carter

12. CEN (Central Education Network)
4300 W. Peterson Avenue
Chicago, IL 60646
(312) 545-7500
Contact: Carol A. Koffarnus

13. EEN (Eastern Educational Television Network)
131 Clarendon Street
Boxton, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 247-0470

14. Pacific Mountain Network (PMN)
Suite 170B, Diamond Hill, 2480 W. 26th Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80211
(303) 455-7161

15. Corporation for Public Broadcasting
    1111 16th Street
    Washington, D.C.
    (202) 293-6160
    (Annenberg Grants)

16. National Public Radio (NPR)
    2025 M Street, N.W.
    Washington, D.C. 20036
    (202) 822-2000

17. National Telecommunications and Information Administration
    U.S. Dept. of Commerce
    N.W. Washington, D.C.

18. (For Oklahomans):
    Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
    500 Education Building
    Oklahoma City, OK 73105
    (405) 521-2444
    Contact: Office of Educational Outreach, Dr. Thurman White

19. Public Broadcasting System
    475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
    Washington, D.C. 20024
    Toll Free 1-800-424-9155
    Contact: Dee Brock

20. AETN Network
    Conway, Arkansas
    1-800-482-5949
    KETJ Jonesboro
    KETS Little Rock
    KETG Arkadelphia
    KAFT Fayetteville
    Contacts: John Cheek, Director of Educative Services
    Loree Leslie, Coordinator of Postsecondary Services

21. Rogers Cablesystems of Fort Smith
    314 South 17th
    Fort Smith, AR 72901
    782-8941
    Contact: Ed Davidson

22. WNPB - New Horizons Newsletter
    P.O. Box TV-24
    Morgantown, W. VA 26507-0897

23. Mississippi Authority for Educational TV
    P.O. Drawer 1101
    Jackson, MS 39205

24. Planet Earth Newsletter
WQED
Pittsburg Broadcasting, Inc.
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburg, PA 15213

25. Films Incorporated Ed.
1213 Wilmette Avenue
Wilmette, IL 60091
1-800-323-4222

26. Communications Complex
Suite 215
Dallas, TX 75039
(214) 869-1102
National University Teleconference Network

27. Association for Media-Based Continuing Education for Engineers, Inc.,
225 North Avenue,
Northwest Atlanta, Georgia 30332.

28. Campus Network
(800)-223-1331
Contact: Jayne Wolf

29. Financial News Network
(212)-887-7327
Contact: Harry Church

30. Television Licensing Center
733 Green Bay Road
Wilmette, IL 60011
Annenberg Specialist: Ellen Weiskopf

31. Southern Educational Communications Association
P.O. Box 5966
Columbia, SC 29250
(803) 799-5517
Contacts: Pet Pantsari, General Manager
Dave Parker, AETN, Arkansas Representative

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Richard Hudson, Vice President-Planning and Development

FROM: Joel R. Stubblefield

DATE: November 4, 1985

SUBJECT: Decisions Regarding Westark T.V. Channel Usage

1. This is in reference to the report of the Television Task Force dated October 10 and my subsequent meeting with the Task Force members and Dr. Bob Wyly on October 23, 1985.

2. After the initial two readings of the report and the clarification of a few points at the above meeting, I have re-read the report for the second time. Let me say at the outset that you and the members of the Television Task Force did a super job in providing a very wide-ranging report, an excellent work that identifies all the issues, considerations, and potentialities involved in using the channel. Good work!

3. Given the Task Force's report and recommendations and subsequent meetings with the cabinet and instructional staff, I have made several decisions regarding the T.V. channel uses. These decisions are as follows:

   A. Organizational Locus. I have decided to assign you, as Vice President-Planning and Development, with the cabinet-level executive responsibility for the T.V. channel operations in their entirety. This decision was based upon your earlier background in broadcast work and the study, work experience, and background you have gained during the last year in working with the cable company, putting together the equipment and chairing the T. V. Task Force and its study effort. Other factors weighing on the decision were existing supervisory span of control and workload, the need for an "honest-broker" mode of operation that allows the channel to be used in a balanced way to accommodate student services, academic, and promotional activities campus-wide, and the fact that academic use of the channel will never comprise the preponderance of programming time even when 10 or 12 credit telecourses are offered.

   B. Staffing. Aside from the decision on executive responsibility for the channel and its use, please proceed immediately with the implementation of the balance of Chapter 7 of the T.V. Task Force report recommendations. Specifically, you should immediately move to advertise and hire a television coordinator as described in the report at pages 47, 48, 50, 51, and 52. This person will report to you; therefore, you should immediately advertise and give me your recommendations. You should also immediately advertise, both on and off-campus, for a technical assistant. There is, in our Appropriation Act, only one authorized position available above the clerk-typist/secretary I level that would hopefully bring the level

of talent described in the report on page 49 (Sec. II)--that of information specialist, grade 14. This is an authorized position that has been in our Bill for some time as an assistant for the Community Relations/Public Relations/Advertising area. We decided not to fill it on a full-time basis last spring in the Board Finance Committee's budget development process, though we did discuss and they verbally approved it on a half-time basis. In view of the T.V. Task Force report, the existing backlog of publications, video-tape, and advertising/public relations work, you should seek to kill two birds with one stone here by hiring an individual to fill both the information specialist and T.V. program technical assistant roles, splitting his/her time between T.V. work for the T.V. coordinator and PIO/community relations work for Sondra. Work with Sondra in developing a job description that covers both and move on hiring as soon as possible. For the maintenance technician work, continue to use Mr. Allen on a part-time hourly basis as described on page 48 of the study.

C. Programming. The task force recommendations on programming and major reliance on telecourses are excellent. Unfortunately, it was not feasible to implement the courses in January '86 as recommended, given the current workload and the lack of previous planning with regard to faculty selection and orientation, procedural and policy development, staff orientation, courses and test materials selection and/or development, and the necessary promotion and marketing (as outlined in the study). If we were to rush to meet that deadline, we would have to drop many other on-going initiatives and concentrate solely on T.V. and would not likely produce the well-coordinated and top-quality effort desired. Secondly, given current rules, we cannot count the credits generated anyway until we get ADHE/State Board approval. Delay of the credit courses 'til early summer and/or next fall will assure proper preparation time for telecourses and to determine if State funding will be likely in the future.

Without State funding, telecourses would be a big loss leader. Given the above, you and the T.V. coordinator should exploit the immediate use of the channel for message board, advertising, promotion marketing, non-credit courses, programs of an educational nature, satellite programming, etc. I would like a process set up to review in advance and "control" our messages, ads, etc. to ensure top quality, that we are presenting the image we want, etc. You should develop a proposal along those lines as to who reviews, when, who approves, etc.

This does not mean that planning for credit telecourses should stop. Planning should proceed forthwith to include development and approval of all the policies, procedures, schedules that are contemplated and listed in the report for such telecourses, through Dr. Wyly, the ISC, and the appropriate standing committees and myself.

D. Coordination and Consortia. In the near-term future, please ensure that we join the desired consortia and networks listed in the report in order to start obtaining necessary programming materials. The T.V. coordinator and/or you should prepare recommendations and necessary paperwork to proceed with that. In addition to that, your

"To Do" list should be expanded to include having the coordinator develop, based on reports from the other 50 states, the recommended policy we want ADHE/SBHE to approve for telecourses. It goes without saying that we will need policies developed by you, the T.V. coordinator, and Dr. Wyly coordinated with internal committees and myself, as appropriate, as regards telecourses, public access, etc.

You should plan on developing an executive-level, 10-15 minute briefing for the Board of Trustees regarding our planning and planned use of the T.V. channel for presentation at the November or December Board meeting. Provision of an updated version of the T.V. Task Force report (sent out with Board packets), as changed by these decisions, would be helpful, along with a list of policy decisions that the Board will have to make with regard to its use. Similarly, a briefing of the entire faculty at the Spring Workshop in January would be appropriate.

E. Equipment. Develop a list of additional equipment that you need for use in next 6 months to a year, and, after ensuring money is available and I approve, order same. A budget will be necessary for the balance of the year. Be aware that funds for a T.V. coordinator were included in the Community Services budget for this year and will need to be transferred. Discuss with Jim the proper place for budgeting T.V. staff, supplies, tapes, consortia fees and equipment for the future.

F. Promotion. In view of the fact that the T.V. Task Force has completed its report and that the release time made available to work on the Task Force goes through the end of the semester, you may want to continue to use the Task Force to develop detailed promotional plans and materials for the channel as outlined at pages 41 and 42 or for some other areas wherein you need their expertise, at your discretion.

Again, the T.V. report is a superb work. Given this general guidance and the report and its recommendations, you should assume the lead in the T.V. effort at Westark and move out in finding the staffing. Should you need further clarification, let me know.

JRS:ep
cc: T.V. Task Force
Frances Bedell
Meta Potts

Dr. Bob Wyly
Dr. Sue Kincannon
Jim Underwood
Sondra LaMar

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
JUL 25 1986